

NAPOLEON AND HIS MARSHALS

By J. T. HEADLEY.

Profusely Illustrated by Reproductions of the Best French Pictures.

CHAPTER XII.

MARSHAL MARMONT.

HIS EARLY LIFE—BRAVERY AT MARENGO—BATTLE OF SALAMANCA. SPLENDID MANUEVERS—HIS DEFENSE AND SURRENDER OF PARIS. THE CHARGE OF TREASON—REVOLUTION OF 1830.

Augustus-Frédéric-Louis Viesse de Marmont was an exception to most of the other Marshals, in that he belonged to a noble family, and, like a gentleman's son, was destined at an early age to the profession of arms. Born on July 20, 1774, at Chatillon-sur-Seine, he was at the age of 15 placed in the infantry as sub-lieutenant.

Leaving this department for the artillery, he was present at the siege of Toulon. The young Bonaparte, commanding the artillery on that occasion, was so pleased with the bravery and skill of Marmont, that after he quelled the revolt of the sections, he made him his Aid-de-Camp, and the next year took him to Italy, to lay there the foundation of his future fame.

At Lodi he charged the enemy's artillery at the head of a body of cavalry, and though his horse was shot under him he succeeded in bringing off a cannon. For his gallantry on this occasion he received a sabre of honor. In this first campaign of Bonaparte, young Marmont exhibited all the impetuosity, daring, and devotion, that could be wished.

For leading a battalion of grenadiers into the thickest of the fight, in the battle of St. George, and aiding essentially in securing the victory, he was selected to present the colors taken in that action to the Directory. Ardent, joyous, and elated, the young soldier proceeded to Paris, and, amid all the pomp and solemnity befitting the occasion, presented the standards in an enthusiastic address, in which he showered eulogies on the army of Italy, and on the young chief at its head.

Returning to Italy, he went through the campaign of 1797 with honor, and, after the fall of Venice, returned to Paris. Being now 23 years of age, full of hope, and with a bright future before him, he, through the influence of Napoleon, obtained the hand of the daughter of M. Ferregaud, one of the wealthiest bankers of Paris. Only a few weeks of leisure, however, were allowed to him, and he was summoned away from his young bride to accompany Bonaparte to Egypt.

A GENERAL OF BRIGADE.

On landing at Malta, he was one of the first ashore, and, in repelling a sortie of the besieged, took the standard of the Knights, and for his bravery was made, on the spot, General of Brigade. He fought gallantly before Alexandria, and while Napoleon was in Syria, remained Governor of the city.

Returning with him to France, he stood

EDITORIAL NOTE: The fascinating serial "Napoleon and His Marshals" will run through the greater part of the present year.

by him in the revolution that overthrew the Directory, and, as a reward for his services, was made Counsellor of State, and invested with the chief command of the artillery and army of reserve.

Young Marmont had gone up rapidly, and now stood in all the freshness of youth beside Bonaparte, who was just en-



MARSHAL MARMONT.

tering on his wondrous career. His youthful imagination was fired by the boundless field that opened before him, and it was with joyous feelings he found himself chosen by the First Consul to accompany him over the San Bernard.

One of the most energetic and efficient officers during that Alpine march, he won the admiration of all by his activity, force,

and bravery. Descending with that shouting army into the plains of Lombardy, he commanded the artillery at the battle of Marengo. Borne away by his boiling courage and panting after distinction, he showed on this terrible day the traits of a true warrior. He moved his hotly-worked guns up to within 10 rods of the enemy's lines and there poured his destructive fire into their ranks.

The rank of General of Division was given him as a reward for his services during this campaign, and he was selected to negotiate the treaty of Campo Formio.

MADE A DUKE.

On his return to Paris he was made Inspector-General of the artillery. After the rupture of the treaty of Amiens by England, and the commencement of war, he was sent into Holland, and thence into Styria, and afterwards into Dalmatia, where, with a small army, he occupied

across marshes and over mountains. He was recalled from this Province with other corps in different parts of the continent to relieve Napoleon, waiting for reinforcements, in the Island of Lobau, whither he had been driven after the battle of Aspern.

To fulfill the urgent commands of the Emperor, he was forced to fight his way through mountain gorges, and across hostile territory, to the shores of the Danube. Pushing the enemy before him, he steadily advanced, and finally brought his victorious columns in safety to that fearful rendezvous the night before the battle of Wagram. His corps formed a part of the reserve in this great conflict, and he was one of those ordered up to sustain the heroic Macdonald in his unparalleled charge on the Austrian center.

Pressing on after the retreating army, he fought desperately at Znaim, and was made Marshal of the Empire. Soon after, he was appointed Governor of the Illyrian Provinces, and during an administration of 18 months, exhibited the attributes of mercy and justice, and won the respect and love of the inhabitants.

WITH THE ARMY OF PORTUGAL.

In 1811 he was sent into Spain to take Massena's place over the army of Portugal. Napoleon's orders to him were precise and peremptory, but Marmont, discouraged and averse to the position in which he was placed, showed a dilatoriness and want of energy that materially injured the plan of operations marked out for him. He, however, restored order among the dispirited and ill-conditioned troops over which he was placed, and effected a junction with Soult. The two marched together to relieve Badajoz, and Wellington was forced to retreat. Marmont followed after, and occupying Salamanca, erected forts at Almaraz.

At length Wellington invested Ciudad Rodrigo, and took it before Marmont, though on the march, could arrive to its rescue. The French Marshal then re-collected his troops at Salamanca. Wellington, in the meantime, marched back to Badajoz, and after a short siege, carried it by assault. Marmont then made a demonstration on Ciudad Rodrigo, and after several combats in which he was victorious, fell back to Salamanca.

Eight months had now passed away, and nothing had been accomplished towards driving the English commander out of Spain. The Duke of Ragusa had certainly shown want of energy, but the truth is the French Generals were divided in their opinions, somewhat jealous of each other and possessing no confidence in King Joseph. There was a head wanting to give force and activity to affairs.

Marmont felt this, and earnestly desired to be recalled and join the army about to invade Russia. Besides, some of the best troops in Spain had been drawn off to swell the army that was to perish in the wars of the north, and everything languished.

At length, however, he showed he was an enemy to be feared. He was fairly pitted against Wellington, but a great portion of his forces being scattered over the country, his immediate army furnished no adequate opposition to that of his adversary. He had retreated therefore to Salamanca. But the forts there being stormed and taken, he continued to retreat to the Duero. Separated from reinforcements which he needed, he dare not hazard a battle, and things began to look threatening around the French Marshal.

BATTLE OF SALAMANCA.

But soon after, he first redeemed his errors, then crowned them by one greater than all, at the battle of Salamanca.

Having succeeded in concentrating his scattered forces he finally, after two months

more skirmishing and retreating resumed the offensive, and determined to open his communication with King Joseph, which had been cut off by Wellington. The former was marching up to his relief, and if the two armies could effect a junction, the English General was lost, and he strained every effort to prevent it.

Then commenced a series of marches, maneuvers and military evolutions seldom, if ever, surpassed by any army. If Marmont's genius, or even good judgment, had been equal to his military science, statues to the Duke of Wellington would

river, which concealed the French army from view, and Cotton, seeing nothing but horsemen there, advanced to the shore with his cavalry. The artillery, however, opening, followed by the rattle of musketry, he ordered up a regiment to support the horse.

A STRANGE INCIDENT.

The conflict now became warm, and before the heavy explosions of the cannon in the bosom of the fog, the upper lighter portion sprang skyward in spiral columns, which, as they reached the rising sun



THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

not have filled, as now, the public squares and edifices of England.

The French Marshal had taken the bold resolution to pass the Duero, and advance to the Guarena, and thus not only open his communication with Joseph, but outflank Wellington. To effect this he made several deceptive movements to bewilder the allies, and on the 16th and 17th of July began his march.

Ascending the river, he crossed it in safety, and on the 17th concentrated his army at Navadel—having marched some of his divisions 40 and 45 miles without halting to rest. At daybreak he was on the Trabancos, over which he had driven the English cavalry posts; and immediately made preparations to cross.

The British troops under Cotton, stationed here, endeavored to dispute the passage, and a most singular scene presented itself. A heavy fog lay along the

turned gold and red in its beams, while through the dark, dense stratum below, were seen the black masses of cavalry, plunging about in the gloom, now appearing and now lost to the eye—mere phantoms careering through the mist.

A hill across the river showed dimly through the fog, covered with French infantry, that seemed as they marched down to battle to crumble off and slide noiselessly away. The English infantry stood and watched this strange spectacle, when suddenly, a single cavalry officer was seen to emerge on foot from the edge of the mist, and stalk towards them. He seemed to press a bloody handkerchief to his breast, as he strode firmly on. But that red spot was a ghastly wound—a cannon ball had torn away his breast, and his beating heart lay exposed to view.

From daylight till 7 o'clock the combat raged, when Wellington came hastily up,

and began to examine the movements of Marmont. Just then a body of French horsemen came galloping across the valley and rode straight up the hill on which Cotton's left wing was posted, and with unparalleled audacity drove back a whole line of English cavalry.

The English reserve were brought up, and these brave fellows were ridden under and hewn down without mercy. Still 40 horsemen swept boldly up and onward and dipped over the farther edge of the hill right in the midst of the enemy's lines. At the bottom of the hill were a body of infantry and part way up a whole squadron of cavalry in order of battle.

A DESPERATE MOVEMENT.

The bold officer at the head of these 40 horsemen suddenly reined up his steed at this sudden apparition, and his followers gathered hastily around him. His destruction seemed inevitable, for the British were already rushing to the charge. But the next moment those reckless riders wheeled, and with a shout, rushed in a tearing gallop on the advancing squadron, and driving it back over its own guns, rolled it down the slope, carrying away the Duke of Wellington and all to the bottom.

Here the mad irruption was stayed by another squadron of heavy dragoons, and the little band that made it, cut to pieces. The officer that led them on, however, escaped almost by a miracle. Surrounded by three troopers, he stretched one on the earth, then putting spurs to his noble steed fled back towards the French lines.

For a quarter of a mile the two pursuing horsemen galloped side by side with him, hewing and hacking away at him with their swords, yet by his extraordinary strength and skill he escaped in safety.

At length Wellington began to retreat towards the Guarena, whither Marmont was already marching. The great struggle now was to see which should reach the Guarena first, and there prepare for battle. Then occurred a spectacle seldom witnessed in war. The two armies, in beautiful order, began to stretch forward.

It was a hot July noon—the air was close and oppressive, rendered still more so by the clouds of dust kicked up by the cavalry and artillery as they thundered along. But in close array, and in splendid order, the panting soldiers pressed after their leaders; and the two armies, only a few rods apart, strained every nerve to out-march each other.

The long black columns streamed forward, and the two hostile hosts, side by side within hailing distance of each other, did not fire a single shot, and to a careless spectator seemed but one army executing some grand maneuver on a day of parade. A few cannon-balls crushing through the ranks, from some of the heights, alone told they were foes.

RACE BETWEEN ARMIES.

Under a broiling sun, covered with clouds of dust, they thus marched for 10 miles side by side, while the officers, wrought up to the highest excitement, were seen pointing with their swords forward, hurrying on the columns, already moving in double-quick time to the rapid beat of the drum, pausing now and then only to touch their chapeaus to each other in courtesy across the narrow space that intervened.

The heavy German cavalry went thundering along this narrow lane as if on purpose to keep peace between the hostile ranks, and thus together they swept over the rolling country, and at night reached the Guarena. After some fighting, darkness closed over the armies and the tired warriors slept.

Marmont had marched his army for two days and nights without cessation, and hence next morning was in no condition to